

# Christian Community

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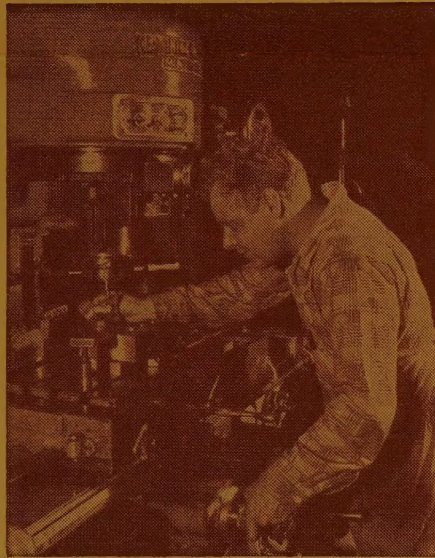
## THE PROGRAM OF ADVANCE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

### THE CHURCH GREETES LABOR

On this forty-seventh observance of Labor Sunday, no less than on the first such occasion in 1910, the National Council of Churches again affirms the continuing concern of the Church with all who work. We believe that all useful work has a divine sanction, and serves the eternal purpose of God. Thus the Christian Church—whose membership consists of people from every field of work—is fulfilling its true function when it relates faith in Jesus Christ to daily work and concerns itself with the welfare of all workers and their aspirations for freedom, justice, and security.

Among the year's outstanding events has been the union of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. We congratulate those unions on having reached this historic milestone. We have confidence that this newly merged organization will insure continued advance on the road to greater industrial peace and progress and solution of problems through understanding. We wish it well.

—From the 1956 Labor Sunday Message of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America



Photograph by HAROLD M. LAMBERT

### Film Shows How Church Faces Its Community

The Bureau of Audio-Visual Aids of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in cooperation with the Commission on Christian Social Action has just released a 28-minute sound color motion picture, *A Train of Action*. Planned and filmed by the late Alan Shilin and completed by Dynamic Films, *A Train of Action* shows how an average established church in a medium-sized city became aware of its community and took the first steps in rising to the challenge.

Like its predecessors in the series of motion pictures produced for the various boards and agencies under the direction of the Bureau, the scenes were "shot" in an actual Evangelical and

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

### RECEIVE GRANT FOR RACE RELATIONS PROJECT

The Fund for the Republic, a foundation noted for its interest in furthering research and action in the interest of a more democratic and free society, has made a grant of \$31,480 to the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches.

This grant has been made to the two social action agencies for a special new program in race relations intended to assist churches and church people in the southeastern part of the country. Efforts are presently being made, in cooperation with the responsible committees and officers of Potomac and Southern synods and the corresponding

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

### Goals Proposed in Community Outreach

When the General Synod meets in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, it will have before it a suggested Program of Advance for the entire Church, presented by the General Council with the advice and cooperation of the boards and agencies. Under the general theme, **CHRIST CALLS TO FAITH AND ACTION NOW**, nine goals have been proposed which will aid us in making our response to Christ's call more significant.

Some of these goals relate to outreach, some to commitment, and others to action. Some of them relate primarily to work which the denominational boards hope to carry on as the arms and agents of our 2,700 congregations, and will require primarily the gifts and prayers of their members. Others relate directly to the life and program of the Christian fellowship in the local church and the local community as parts of the world church and the world community, respectively.

One of these objectives is expressed in the words: **EVERY CONGREGATION ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SOCIAL ACTION**. It reminds us that an Advance for Christ means not only an advance in size but an advance in depth. It means not only more members, more missionaries, more mission churches but a certain quality of discipleship. It calls for the kind of commitment which expresses Christian faith in terms of community outreach, service to the needs of men, and a witness that challenges every force in society which denies community, justice, and brotherhood.

When final plans for the Advance have been perfected by the General

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)



## The Program of Advance in the Local Church

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

Synod, materials will be prepared co-operatively by the boards and agencies, in conjunction with the Department of United Promotion, to assist the pastor and the officials of the local church in working toward the various goals. The Commission on Benevolent Institutions, no less than the Commission on Christian Social Action, is eager to further this objective, for social service and social action both contribute to the total welfare of the community.

In the meantime, however, there will be many opportunities for pastors and lay leaders in our churches to examine again the role of the church in community service and social action. Already many congregations have become aware of the materials which have emerged from the first National Conference on the Churches and Social Welfare, held in Cleveland in November, 1955, under the auspices of the National Council of Churches.

*A Message to the Churches*, adopted by the Conference, was sent to all of our pastors early in June through the cooperation of the Commission on Benevolent Institutions, the Board of National Missions, and the Commission on Christian Social Action. Additional copies are available from the last-named office at 10c, 7c each for 50 or more.

Now a new study guide, *The Social Ministry of the Local Church*, by Muriel S. Webb, may be secured from the Commission office at 30c each.

Both of these publications, together with other material useful for group programs or as background information, are to be included in a *Study Packet* on Social Welfare, now being prepared in cooperation with the Congregational Christians for sale after September 15 at one dollar.

### The Role of the Local Church

What is the role of the local church in social education and action? This question was thoroughly discussed in one of the sections at the Cleveland conference. It came to the following conclusion and so reported to the conference as a whole:

The local church has a distinctive opportunity and responsibility to engage both alone and co-operatively with other congregations in effective social education and action. Among its objectives should be the following:

(1) to interpret to its members the Christian basis of the church's social concern and the dimensions of its task;

(2) to study the community, its needs and resources, with a sensitivity to the needs of people and a sense of its mission in the community;

(3) to cooperate with welfare agencies, private or public, in meeting the needs which exist—enlisting support, participating in community social planning, encouraging qualified members to serve in agencies or on their boards and assisting in the recruitment and training of personnel for such agencies;

(4) to stimulate the extension of existing agencies, public or private, or the creation of new ones to meet unsolved problems;

(5) to engage in service projects where such action is most promising;

(6) to inform the membership of the position of denominational and interdenominational councils on question of public policy;

(7) to take action on questions of legislation or public policy affecting the common welfare.

The Section also made certain recommendations as to how a congregation can most effectively fulfill these aims.

In giving expression to its concern for welfare agencies on the one hand and for social education and action on the other, the congregation is faced with the problem of integrating its interest and activity, so that confusion of aims or waste of resources are avoided. A single committee responsible for both community outreach and social education — or frequent consultation where two separate committees exist — would be imperative.

The effective functioning of the church in the interest of welfare and justice is further dependent upon an inner Christian integrity which expresses itself in a community-wide inclusiveness transcending limitations of race, culture, and class . . .

Finally, a community ministry on the part of the local church calls for the dedicated service of its lay members. Their participation in social education and action, in voluntary community service, or in cooperation with welfare agencies is an expression of the life of the church and a ministry which gives vitality to the entire life of the church.

To these suggestions and those offered in preceding issues of *CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY*, the Commission on Christian Social Action will continue to add whatever help it can—in order that we of the Evangelical and Reformed Church may together achieve the goal: **EVERY CONGREGATION ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SOCIAL ACTION.**

## COMING!

*Social Action*, a Magazine of Christian concern, published jointly by the Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed Social Action agencies, is planning a series of forthcoming issues which will deal with subjects of special interest to readers of *CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY*. In September there will be a feature article on Farm Production and Surpluses. The October issue will have an article on Election Issues; in November the feature will be Housing.

These topics are all of grave concern to American citizens these days. So are other subjects to be discussed in future issues of *Social Action*: Our Senior Citizens, The Church and Civil and Political Life, Balance Sheet of Civil Liberties, Forces Affecting Teen-Agers, Leisure and Its Uses.

*Social Action* is edited by Dr. F. Ernest Johnson, former professor of Education at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Subscriptions, at \$2. per year, can be ordered through the office of the Commission on Christian Social Action.



## Film Shows How Church Faces Its Community

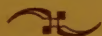
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Reformed congregation and no professional actors were used. Members of the congregation, the pastor of the church, people in the community "play" their own roles.

The people of St. Paul's Church take their first step beyond their traditional activities when they sponsor a family of displaced persons who serve as custodians of the church. The response of these newcomers in turn leads to new discoveries and the blazing of new trails such as any church—*your church*—might attempt in any community.

The film will be especially useful to congregations contemplating an effective follow-up to the Christian Commitment program or planning for the Advance Program's emphasis on community outreach. But any group which is wondering why it should be concerned about Christian social action and how one gets started will find it stimulating.

*A Train of Action* may be rented at twelve dollars per showing from the Bureau of Audio-Visual Aids, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pennsylvania, or 1720 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis 3, Missouri. Prints may be purchased from the same source. *Do not order it from the Commission. Attempting to do so will only mean delay.*



## RECEIVE GRANT FOR RACE RELATIONS PROJECT

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 2)

Congregational Christian conferences, to secure two well qualified persons as community relations consultants. It has been recommended that two women, one white and the other Negro, from among our churches in the states of Virginia and North Carolina, be challenged to undertake this work.

Direction of the project will be in the hands of the two church agencies, working through a committee on which both national and regional representatives will be included.

## CURRENT CONCERNS IN ECONOMIC LIFE

For most of the present century the official agencies of the Protestant churches have supported the right of workers to organize in unions of their own choosing for collective bargaining. During this period the labor movement has become increasingly strong, particularly after the organizational drives of the mid-thirties. It would be foolish to deny that with power there comes also the possibility of the abuse of power. However, while there have been instances in which both labor unions and management have used their power unwisely, both the labor movement and management have shown increasing maturity and responsibility in the use of their power.

In certain industries we find that organized labor and collective bargaining have been accepted as necessary aspects of democracy in an industrial society. Socially responsible managements are no less committed than unions to the promotion of good industrial relations on a basis of mutual respect.

It is very essential to our moral and spiritual life that both labor and management preserve integrity in their working relations. Labor must not lose sight of its responsibility for giving a full and fair day's work, and, likewise, it is management's responsibility to provide good working conditions and an equitable wage. Labor and management have shown an active interest in social welfare, education, political life, and community concerns generally, as well as in their own economic advancement. The common participation of leaders of labor and of business in not only the common affairs of the community but also in the life of the churches is a potential source of greater understanding and health.

The agricultural sector of our economic community, on the other hand, faces the immediate problem of shortages and surpluses, farm costs and price supports. These involve many technical questions, as well as questions of general social policy, and there are no easy answers. These problems are not resolved either by decrying government supports and controls or by applying the same formula to all kinds of agriculture. We would call special attention to the fact that for the "low income" farm units the immediate needs are for credit at low cost on easy terms, and technical guidance, in order to survive.

The other tendency to which we would direct attention has been called the "factory in the field," or the corporation farm. This represents a real danger, in that it replaces the family-sized farm. The replacement of such a basic institution in our economy must be justified by more than mere efficiency, for the social, moral, economic, and political aspects of this tendency are far-reaching.

Wise policies in dealing with the agricultural situation must take account of the importance of the security of the producers and the general welfare of the whole community. We would urge our church groups, and especially those in rural areas, to study and work for solutions in this area of economic life.

We affirm that the health of our economic order depends not only upon productivity, but also upon the discharge of the mutual obligation to serve the needs of others. No economic order can endure which depends upon chance or give away schemes. The use of such schemes to increase sales is as wrong as the demand for them.

—From the *Blue Book Report of the Commission on Christian Social Action to the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1956.*



### Christian Community

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## UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR

The tenth annual World Order and United Nations Seminar, which is sponsored jointly by the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, will be held in New York this year on October 15, 16 and 17. Dr. Herman F. Reissig, International Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action, and Dr. Huber F. Klemme, Executive Secretary of the Commission, will be co-chairmen of the seminar. Registrations are now being received by the Commission's office.

The Seminar provides an excellent opportunity to gain first hand information concerning United States foreign policy, and the inner workings of the United Nations. One whole day is spent at the UN building, when officials of the United Nations meet with the delegates to discuss various aspects of the organization's program. Some time is spent in meetings of committees which are in session. There is time for questions and discussion under expert guidance during the seminar sessions.

The total registration cost, including the seminar dinner on the second day, is \$6.00. Lodging, meals, and transportation costs will depend on choices made by the delegates themselves. Lodging costs may be kept at a minimum (\$2. a night) for delegates who register early and are willing to share dormitory rooms at the Congregational Christian Service Center, at 110 East 29th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Mrs. C. H. Riggs is hostess at the service center.

Seminar sessions will be held at Riverside Church, Riverside Drive at 120th Street.

Attendance at the Seminar is usually limited to about 50. To be sure of a place interested persons should register early.

## CHURCH MEN OPPOSE RACE BAR, SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL AID

The Sixth Quadrennial Convention of the Churchman's Brotherhood of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, meeting in Milwaukee in June, adopted a series of resolutions calling upon the men of the church to contribute to the solution of community, national, and world problems.

On the ground that the strength of the Protestant churches places upon their members a responsibility to give practical expression to their faith, one resolution urged church men to take active part in labor unions, farm organizations, trade and professional associations, and to vote as intelligent, responsible Christian citizens, using available resources to study the records of candidates and parties.

The Convention also called upon members, chapters, and federations both

in the North and in the South to work for an end to racial discrimination and to welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, and color into their churches and Brotherhood chapters.

In other actions the Convention urged men to work with other groups in their congregations to provide programs and leadership which will be of assistance to youth; to become better informed about the United Nations; and to support a long-range program of technical aid and economic development in under-developed areas of the world.

Over six hundred delegates attended the meeting. Messrs. Cecil Stargel of Hudson, Kansas, and Ernest Raker of Indianapolis, Indiana, participated in a swift six-minute discussion of Christian social action along with the executive secretary of the Commission.

## FIRST AID FOR PUZZLED VOTERS

These are days when responsible Christian citizens are giving a good deal of thought to the words of candidates for political office, and when they are deciding how they will vote on November 6. Among other things these citizens will want to read is *The Christian Citizen Looks at the 84th Congress*. This is the 1956 edition of the Congressional Voting Record, known as "Roll Call" and can now be obtained from the office of the Commission, at 10c a copy, \$7.50 per hundred.

This helpful document reports on a number of selected issues which are of concern to all Americans. It was prepared by *Congressional Quarterly*, in consultation with representatives of social action agencies of a dozen Protestant denominations.

There are members of Congress who are glad to have their voting records examined. We have heard one of them say, "I want my people to know what I'm doing here in Washington. Let them decide on the basis of my record whether they want me to come back or not."

This makes good sense. It is important, too, for responsible Christian voters, not only to study the records of their representatives in Congress, but

also to ask questions concerning some of the issues which will be before the nation between now and election day: questions about our basic freedoms; about welfare, housing, social security; about economic policy and industrial relations; yes, about international affairs, and military preparedness too. Where do the candidates stand on these things?

Many readers of *Christian Community* have already seen the little folder, *Questions for Christians*. The Commission on Christian Social Action can still supply some of these at 10c each, 10-100 at 5c each. Every responsible voter will want to examine these questions, and to see where candidates stand in regard to the principles suggested by the folder.

Another aid which will soon be released is the statement of the General Board of the National Council of Churches, entitled *Christian Responsibility in the 1956 Elections*. This summarizes some of the concerns on which the National Council has taken a position and will be of further help in evaluating party platforms and campaign performances. This also may be ordered from the Commission at ten cents per copy, with discount for quantity orders.